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STORAGE LIFE OF DAIRY PRODUCTS

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Storage Life of Dairy Products

The United States exports a variety of dairy products. These may reach final consumers with variations in quality due to several factors, such as the quality of raw material from which the product was made, product composition, sanitation and care during manufacture, kind of packaging and conditions of handling and storage. Because all dairy products are more or less perishable, they should be stored in clean surroundings, free from insects and rodents. The relative humidity should be moderate and extremes of temperature avoided.

No rigid or specific conditions can be set for storage life of each product because the rate at which dairy product life during storage is shortened depends upon many factors. Although some of these factors are not within the direct control of the buyer, requirements as to quality, composition, and packaging can be included in purchase specifications. The quantity of products delivered at any one time can be limited to an amount which will move readily into channels of trade.

An accelerated reduction of product life in storage, and possible lowering of product quality, would not necessarily mean that the product was unsafe or unusable. It could mean, instead, that the original quality factors were being lost and that this loss might be more rapid in some lots of the product than in others. Periodic inspections are important, therefore, to reveal unsatisfactory storage conditions and changes in product quality soon enough to permit corrective action before loss of quality would become serious.

The following time and temperature figures are general guidelines only. Because of the variable factors involved, the storage life of any specific shipment cannot be guaranteed merely through the use of this guide.

Product (commercial pack)	Approximate storage life at specific temperatures	Critical or dangerous storage conditions
Butter (in bulk) -----	1 month @ 40° F. 12 months @ —10° F.	{ Above 50° F., or damp or wet storage.
Butteroil (sealed, full tins; maximum moisture 0.3%) -	3 months @ 70° F. 6 months @ 50° F. 9 months @ 32° F.	{ Above 75° F.
Anhydrous milk fat (sealed, full tins; maximum mois- ture 0.2%) -----	3 months @ 70° F. 6 months @ 50° F. 9 months @ 32° F.	{ Above 75° F.
Ghee (sealed, full tins) -----	6 months @ 90° F. 9 months @ 70° F. 18 months @ 40° F.	{ Above 90° F.
Cheddar cheese -----	6 months @ 40° F. 18 months @ 34° F.	{ Above 60° F. or below 30° F.
Processed cheese -----	3 months @ 70° F. 12 months @ 40° F.	{ Above 90° F. or below 30° F.
Grated cheese (in moisture- proof pack) -----	3 months @ 70° F. 12 months @ 40° F.	{ Above 70° F., or above 17% moisture in the product.
Sterilized whole milk -----	4 months @ 70° F. 12 months @ 40° F.	{ Above 90° F. or below 30° F.
Nonfat dry milk, Extra Grade (in moisture-proof pack) -----	6 months @ 90° F. 16 months @ 70° F. 24 months @ 40° F.	{ Above 110° F.
Dry whole milk, Extra Grade (gas pack; maxi- mum oxygen 2%) -----	3 months @ 90° F. 9 months @ 70° F. 18 months @ 40° F.	{ Above 100° F.
Sweetened condensed milk ----	3 months @ 90° F. 9 months @ 70° F. 15 months @ 40° F.	{ Above 100° F. or below 20° F., or dampness suf- ficient to cause can rust- ing.
Evaporated milk -----	1 month @ 90° F. 12 months @ 70° F. (cases to be inverted every 2 months) 24 months @ 40° F.	{ Above 90° F. or below 30° F., or dampness suf- ficient to cause can rust- ing.

Compiled by Dairy and Poultry Division, Foreign Agricultural Service from material supplied by Standardization Branch, Consumer and Marketing Service and Eastern Utilization Research and Development Division of Agricultural Research Service, USDA.

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